

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 1. Please cancel claims 2-8. Please add new claims 9-20. The claims are as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for purging abandoned shopping carts from an electronic commerce web site operated by a merchant, said electronic commerce web site comprising a web server, said method comprising the steps of:

identifying, upon occurrence of a next update time, guest shopping carts and established shopping carts existing at the electronic commerce web site, the guest shopping carts being shopping carts that belong to guest shoppers of an the electronic commerce web site, and the established shopping carts being shopping carts that belong to established shoppers of the electronic commerce web site, a guest shopper being defined as a shopper who does not have any prior relationship of record with the merchant, an established shopper being defined as a shopper who has a prior relationship of record with the merchant;

determining the total number (L) of guest shopping carts existing at the electronic commerce web site;

ascertaining whether L exceeds a specified guest shopper threshold number (M) of guest shopping carts existing at the electronic commerce web site, wherein if said ascertaining ascertains that L does not exceed M then again performing the identifying, determining steps, and ascertaining steps, and wherein if said ascertaining ascertains that L exceeds M then the method further comprises the steps of:

applying a guest shopper garbage collection routine to the shopping carts that

belong to guest shoppers purging a subset of the guest shopping carts from the electronic commerce web site according to a first algorithm that is specific to the guest shopping carts, said first algorithm being comprised by the web server; and

applying an established shopper garbage collection routine to the shopping carts that belong to established shoppers purging a subset of the established shopping carts from the electronic commerce web site according to a second algorithm that is specific to the established shopping carts, said second algorithm being comprised by the web server, said second algorithm differing from the first algorithm; and

again performing the identifying, determining steps, and ascertaining steps, after performing the steps of purging the subset of the guest shopping carts and purging the subset of the established shopping carts.

2-8. (Canceled)

9. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the next update time in the identifying step occurs periodically at discrete times.

10. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the prior relationship between the merchant and a first established shopper of said established shoppers comprises an account of the first established shopper on the web server.

11. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the prior relationship between the merchant and a first

established shopper of said established shoppers comprises a registration of a credit card number of the first established shopper on the web server.

12. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the prior relationship between the merchant and a first established shopper of said established shoppers comprises a registration of a shipping address of the first established shopper on the web server.

13. (New) The method of claim 1,

wherein the web server comprises a first guest shopper session object for a first guest shopping cart of said guest shopping carts, wherein the first guest shopper session object was created when the first guest shopping cart came into existence when a first guest shopper associated with the first guest shopping cart initially accessed the web server via a communication network, wherein purging the first guest shopping cart due to L exceeding M comprises destroying the first guest shopper session object; and

wherein the web server comprises a first established shopper session object for a first established shopping cart of said established shopping carts, wherein the first established shopper session object was created when the first established shopping cart came into existence when a first established shopper associated with the first established shopping cart initially accessed the web server via the communication network, wherein purging the first established shopping cart due to L exceeding M comprises destroying the first established shopper session object.

14. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises specifying the guest

threshold shopper number, and wherein said specifying is performed by a system administrator prior to said ascertaining.

15. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said purging the subset of the guest shopping carts and purging the subset of the established shopping carts results in a higher frequency of guest shopping carts being purged than of established shopping carts being purged.

16. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said purging the subset of the guest shopping carts according to the first algorithm comprises purging all guest shopping carts that have been inactive for a given period of time, and wherein a guest shopping cart is inactive for the given period of time if there is no addition, deletion, or change of an item in the guest shopping cart during the given period of time.

17. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said purging the subset of the guest shopping carts according to the first algorithm comprises purging a specified number of the guest shopping carts that have been longest inactive, and wherein a guest shopping cart is inactive when there is no addition, deletion, or change of an item in the guest shopping cart.

18. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said purging the subset of the guest shopping carts according to the first algorithm comprises purging a specified number of the guest shopping carts that are most heavily loaded in terms of purchase price.

19. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said purging the subset of the guest shopping carts according to the first algorithm comprises purging a specified number of the guest shopping carts that are most heavily loaded in terms of item count.

20. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:

detecting a new shopper accessing the web server;

determining whether the new shopper is a guest shopper; and

if said determining whether the new shopper is a guest shopper determines that the new shopper is a guest shopper then creating a guest shopper session object with respect to the new shopper, otherwise creating an established shopper session object with respect to the new shopper.